

Capitol Region Council of Governments

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Environmental Justice Advisory Board Meeting Capitol Region Council of Governments Hartford, CT May 18, 2004 Minutes

Board Members Present: Katherine Jones, Career Team Plus; Charlie Carson, CT Transit; Dr. Mark Mitchell, Hartford Environmental Justice Network; Lee Erdmann, City of Hartford; Richard Parmlee, Sr, CT Hartford Environmental Justice Network; Barbara Breslin, Federal Highway Administration; Mark Phillips, ConnDOT.

Others: Grayson Wright, ConnDOT; Bradford Smith, Windsor; Tom Maziarz, Mario Marrero, and Dan Czaja, CRCOG.

1. Welcome: Tom Maziarz called the meeting to order and welcomed members of the Environmental Justice Advisory Board. He stated that he would give a presentation on the new Equity Assessment Technique followed by an EJ Analysis of the Transportation Improvement Program.

2. Discussion of Issues.

- a. Equity Assessment Technique:** Mr. Maziarz gave a presentation on a proposed Equity Assessment Technique. He explained that the user benefit analysis is a good tool for environmental justice because it can be used to evaluate individual projects and measure benefits received, not just dollars invested. He gave an example of the New Britain Busway project and how the advantages for using this tool allows for better informed decisions. Dr. Mitchell asked if emission reductions could be measured by the user benefit analysis. He stated that sulfur dioxide was still at a significant level in the Hartford area and that residents living within a half mile of I-84 have increased health risks because of the pollutants.

Conclusions: Committee members felt that the new methodology was appropriate for assessment of major projects. Mr. Maziarz also suggested that emissions reductions could be identified as a long-term goal for the EJAB to tackle.

- b. Transportation Improvement Program:** Mr. Maziarz provided a general review of the TIP explaining that this was the first time the TIP would include all transportation projects to be funded for the next five years. Previous TIPs only listed projects for 3 years. Maps were used to show the Primary and Secondary EJ Target Areas and the projects that could be assigned to a location either within or outside those target areas.

Conclusions: The committee felt the distribution of benefits was equitable. The EJ target areas will receive a proportionate share of the investments.

- c. Diesel Emissions:** The concern regarding low emission buses and reducing diesel emissions in general is a priority. Dr. Mitchell raised the question regarding whether funds from the TIP could be used in the conversion of particulate filters for paratransit buses or if funds could be added to address the issue. Mr. Maziarz suggested that we look into the issue in greater detail to find out the total costs and if funding is already available for the conversions.

Conclusions: Mr. Maziarz offered as the next meeting topic, an invitation to CT Transit, Greater Hartford Transit District, Hartford Board of Education and Laidlaw to give a presentation on the new ultra low sulfur fuel and what steps are being taken by area transit providers to convert their bus fleets to this new technology. The Board decided to hold the next meeting at CT Transit on June 15, 2004, pending the availability of the invitees.